



Education Review Office
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

St Joseph's School (Queenstown)
Queenstown

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External Evaluation

ERO External Evaluation

St Joseph's School (Queenstown)

1 Context

St Joseph's School is a Years 1 to 8 Catholic school in Queenstown. The school has a long tradition of responding to the Dominican way which has an emphasis on learning, prayer, community and service. The school has strong connections with the parish and a focus on providing a caring family environment for children. The roll of about 140 children means that class sizes can be kept relatively small across all year levels, ensuring opportunities for children to have one-to-one attention. The school is multi-cultural, welcoming children and families from their diverse backgrounds. The richness that this diversity adds to the learning community is valued and celebrated. The school is led by an experienced principal. The staff is a mix of experienced and newer teachers. The school is in the early stages of forming a Community of Learning with several other local schools, including Wakatipu High School. The board and leaders responded comprehensively to the recommendations in the 2013 ERO report.

2 Equity and excellence

The vision and valued outcomes defined by the school for all children are to 'create confident learners who, like Jesus, make a positive difference.' The school focuses on the values of honesty (pongonga) and respect (tapu). The school's vision and values connect with its strategic aims to celebrate the special Catholic character, inspire and engage students and families in learning, and build a positive environment. Teachers have developed a 'toolbox' of ideas and strategies for learners that help children to be reflective, resilient, resourceful, and to build effective relationships. Leaders and teachers focus on developing deep-thinking skills across all year levels and in a range of curriculum areas. The school's achievement information shows that:

- most children achieve well at this school
- there is little learning disparity between groups of children
- almost all Māori learners are achieving at or above National Standards for reading, writing and mathematics
- Pacific students are achieving well
- children whose first language is not English are supported to make accelerated progress and reach expected levels for their age and stage of schooling.

There are guidelines for teachers around the school's approach to moderation and how teachers are expected to make assessment decisions.

Since the last ERO evaluation, the school has responded to an achievement issue in boys' writing and reduced the disparity identified in 2015. The school focuses on supporting children who are already at the National Standards in reading and writing to sustain or accelerate their progress. Children who are below expectations in reading and writing are a particular focus of teachers' efforts to accelerate their progress. Trustees have refined the way they seek assurance about groups of students whose progress and achievement are of concern. The board scrutinises learning information to know what is working and what more could be done.

3 Accelerating achievement

How effectively does this school respond to Māori children whose learning and achievement need acceleration?

The school responds very effectively to Māori children whose learning and achievement need acceleration. All staff know Māori learners well and respond appropriately to the needs of these learners and the aspirations of their whānau. Leaders and teachers explore multiple ways to engage Māori learners by closely involving whānau in decisions about learning. Teachers tailor their approach to the needs of each Māori child.

How effectively does this school respond to other children whose learning and achievement need acceleration?

Leaders and teachers use what works well culturally and academically for Māori learners to provide a supportive learning environment for other children whose progress needs to be accelerated.

The school responds very effectively to its English Language Learners (ELL). ELL children who need additional support with learning benefit from the collaborative efforts of key staff. Staff members have participated in professional learning about effective practice for ELL students and have put in place targeted support for these learners. The next step is to formally evaluate the impact of their efforts to improve progress and achievement for ELL children.

Senior leaders and teachers are very reflective about the impact of their work. They regularly consider how to adapt and change teaching approaches to better meet the needs of students. The principal provides the board with interim progress reports in relation to the targets set to accelerate children's learning. These reports clearly show progress throughout the year against desired outcomes.

4 School conditions

How effectively do the school's curriculum and other organisational processes and practices develop and enact the school's vision, values, goals and targets for equity and excellence?

The curriculum and other practices at this school effectively develop and enact the St Joseph's School vision for learners. This is evident in:

- Positive and caring relationships between adults and children
- learning environments that are engaging, enjoyable and highly focused on productive learning time
- a rich and broad variety of engaging learning experiences, notably music, languages, trips and camps
- the way that children can articulate what they are learning, understand their next steps, and lead their own learning.

All children benefit from learning about the bicultural heritage of Aotearoa New Zealand. Children benefit from supportive tuakana-teina relationships when older children, or those with more knowledge, help others with their learning.

Māori children at this school know that their identity, language and culture are valued and celebrated. They, and all other children, benefit from a strong culture of care (manaakitanga) and family-like atmosphere at all levels of the school (whanaungatanga). The voices of Māori children and whānau are gathered and responded to well. The board, leaders, teachers and whānau have developed a shared understanding of Māori success at this school. The adults in this school work collaboratively to achieve the high expectations they have for Māori children. The Māori teacher is working with staff to further develop capability in te reo and tikanga Māori.

Teachers have strengthened the way they inquire into the impact of their teaching to know what has improved learner outcomes. Inquiries by teachers are timely, focus on students at risk, and explore strategies that work effectively for students who need additional support. In addition, other informal, collaborative discussions between teachers focus on and explore the best way to assist children with learning.

The school benefits from strong professional leadership that builds the trust and involvement of all members of the learning community. Leadership has established the conditions for effective inquiry and knowledge building in order to continually improve outcomes for learners. Leaders and teachers provide effective support for beginning teachers.

The board works with the school's community to develop and periodically refresh the school's vision, values and strategic intention to provide learners with equitable opportunities for excellence. The board has well-documented processes for trustees to carry out their roles and continue to do so in the future.

Next steps are for the school to:

- review the clarity and quality of reporting to parents about progress and achievement in relation to the National Standards and curriculum levels
- refine moderation guidelines and practices to ensure that teachers make good use of the school's guidelines for moderation and use assessment information from the wider curriculum for decisions, particularly about reading and writing
- consider the extent to which students are provided with sufficient challenge and support to access the next level of their learning
- extend curriculum review/evaluation to ensure greater depth and wider coverage
- refine the evaluative questions leaders and trustees ask about student learning and improve the recording of the answers.

5 Going forward

How well placed is the school to accelerate the achievement of all children who need it?

Leaders and teachers:

- know the children whose learning and achievement need to be accelerated
- respond effectively to the strengths, needs and interests of each child
- regularly evaluate how well teaching is working for these children
- act on what they know works well for each child
- build teacher capability effectively to achieve equitable outcomes for all children
- are well placed to achieve and sustain equitable and excellent outcomes for all children.

ERO is likely to carry out the next review in three years.

6 Board assurance on legal requirements

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of the school completed the ERO board assurance statement and Self Audit Checklists. In these documents they attested that they had taken all reasonable steps to meet their legislative obligations related to the following:

- board administration
- curriculum
- management of health, safety and welfare
- personnel management
- asset management.

During the review, ERO checked the following items because they have a potentially high impact on student safety and wellbeing:

- emotional safety of students (including prevention of bullying and sexual harassment)
- physical safety of students
- teacher registration
- processes for appointing staff
- stand down, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions
- attendance
- compliance with the provisions of the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.

7 Recommendation

To continue the school's work in promoting equitable and excellent outcomes for all learners, the board and senior leaders should respond to the next steps identified in this report.



Dr Lesley Patterson
Deputy Chief Review Officer Te Waipounamu Southern

19 January 2017

About the school

Location	Queenstown	
Ministry of Education profile number	4016	
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)	
School roll	146	
Gender composition	Female 59% Male 41%	
Ethnic composition	Māori	7%
	Pākehā	71%
	Asian	10%
	Latin American	5%
	Other	7%
Review team on site	November 2016	
Date of this report	19 January 2017	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	October 2013
	Education Review	April 2010
	Education Review	February 2007